

Since its inception in 1962, the Tulare-Kings Police Academy has been a vital part of training our future law enforcement officers in the Central Valley. The program initially began its operations out of the Tulare County Sheriff's Office and trained future recruits there for over a decade.

In 1973, the program moved to the College of the Sequoias campus in Visalia, providing even more access to young students looking to enter a career of public service. The program spent nearly forty years at the Visalia campus, with dozens of students graduating each year eager to begin protecting and serving the Central Valley. In 2010, the program made its most recent move into a state-of-the-art facility on the Hanford College of the Sequoias campus.

After sixty years of operation, the Tulare-Kings Police Academy has produced over 150 graduating classes from its programs across three different campuses. These men and women have gone on to protect our communities throughout the Valley. Their service has been a consistent display of duty, honor, and commitment to their communities—all traits instilled into them by the Tulare-Kings Police Academy.

I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Tulare-Kings Police Academy at the College of the Sequoias.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE VETERANS EQUAL ACCESS ACT

#### HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 23, 2022*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I introduced the Veterans Equal Access Act. This legislation would provide equal access to state-legal medical marijuana for veterans participating in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care by ending the harmful VA prohibition on doctors and healthcare providers giving opinions or recommendations on or completing forms for state-legal medical marijuana programs.

The cannabis laws in this country are broken, including our laws that govern veterans' access to medical cannabis. Many veterans report using cannabis for medical purposes as a substitute for prescription drugs. The VA National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has acknowledged that veterans use cannabis to relieve symptoms of PTSD, and that in many states, PTSD is a qualifying condition for enrollment in medical cannabis programs.

Most states with state-legal medical cannabis programs require some sort of recommendation or approval from a medical provider for patients to enroll in the program. However, VA policy prevents VA physicians and care providers from any participation, including helping with the required paperwork or forms.

This forces veterans to seek care outside of the VA system to receive medical cannabis recommendations, which can interrupt continuity of care, lead to mistakes or gaps in care, and require veterans to pay out of pocket for addition physician visits. VA physicians

should not be denied the ability to offer a recommendation that they think may meet the needs of their patients.

Veterans should not be forced outside the VA system to seek treatment that is legal in their state.

The Veterans Equal Access Act would allow VA doctors and healthcare providers to give their opinions or recommendations on medical cannabis and to complete forms in compliance with state-legal medical marijuana programs.

I look forward to working with my co-lead, Representative BRIAN MAST, and my colleagues in the House and Senate to enact this legislation and provide equal access to state-legal medical cannabis for our veterans participating in VA health care.

#### RECOGNIZING NATIONAL SCLERODERMA AWARENESS DAY

#### HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 23, 2022*

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the estimated 300,000 Americans living with Scleroderma, an autoimmune disease for which there is currently no cure, and we are unsure of its cause. The actions of individuals like Amy Gietzen and organizations such as the National Scleroderma Foundation have helped—and will continue to help—the community of individuals affected by Scleroderma spread awareness about this disease and work to advance research on a cure.

Scleroderma is an autoimmune disease that affects connective tissue and the vascular system through the excess production of collagen. A localized version of the disease can cause thickening and scarring of connective tissue, or fibrosis, in small areas of the skin. Scleroderma can also be systemic and result in fibrosis in the internal organs. Scleroderma can affect almost anyone and results in issues with the skin, muscles, joints, blood vessels, and in some cases, the heart, lungs, and esophagus. The disease is progressive, presents differently in every individual, and, in many cases, can be terminal.

Amy Gietzen, born and raised in Buffalo, NY, was diagnosed with Scleroderma when she was just 19 years old and has been living with the diagnosis ever since. Today, Ms. Gietzen is on the Board of Directors for the Buffalo chapter of the National Scleroderma Foundation, and she serves as the Chair of the Patient Education and Support Committee.

In addition to her involvement with the National Scleroderma Foundation, Ms. Gietzen is a columnist for the online publication Scleroderma News. She also travels across the country to speak publicly about her experiences with Scleroderma and her personal medical journey. In her quest to raise awareness for the disease, Ms. Gietzen has made it a priority to share her personal story and support others who receive a Scleroderma diagnosis.

Organizations like the National Scleroderma Foundation are similarly working to support those living with the disease. The National Scleroderma Foundation was founded in 1998 to “advance medical research, promote disease awareness, and provide support and education to people with scleroderma, their

families, and support networks.” The Foundation provides resources including research updates and support groups. The National Scleroderma Foundation is focused on building a sense of community and solidarity for those living with Scleroderma.

I am proud to join the National Scleroderma Foundation in recognizing June 2022 as National Scleroderma Awareness Month and celebrating National Scleroderma Awareness Day on June 29, 2022. Throughout this month, the National Scleroderma Foundation is promoting the “#tealforscleroderma” campaign. To show support for those living with Scleroderma and raise awareness about the disease, on June 29th, lights on the Peace Bridge, Niagara Falls, and The Electric Building in Buffalo will turn teal.

It is due to the efforts of individuals like Ms. Amy Gietzen that I speak on this matter today. I thank Ms. Gietzen for her perseverance in the face of this disease and her tireless work advocating for scientific advancements, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the courageous work of Ms. Amy Gietzen and the National Scleroderma Foundation and go #tealforscleroderma.

#### RECOGNIZING DR. SHETAL SHAH, MD, FAAP

#### HON. THOMAS R. SUOZZI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 23, 2022*

Mr. SUOZZI. Madam Speaker, as I near the end of my Congressional public service, I rise today to recognize my constituent Dr. Shetal Shah, MD, FAAP of Syosset, New York for his sustained and expert advocacy in support of children's health. During my tenure representing New York's third Congressional District, Dr. Shah has been an indispensable resource to my office—and the entire Long Island Congressional Delegation, on issues related to children.

As former Legislative Chairman of the Long Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and an expert in the intricacies of children's health insurance, Dr. Shah worked with my office to staunchly defend the gains in children's health insurance coverage made as a result of passage of the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. His vigorous advocacy, in partnership with several national medical organizations, assisted our office and other members of New York State's Congressional Delegation in preserving core provisions of this landmark legislation, including the expansion of Medicaid and pediatric-specific tenets of the essential health care benefits package.

He has also worked to ensure reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program, which in New York insures almost 750,000 of our state's children. Dr. Shah has been a vocal supporter of the need to reauthorize this program since its inception and worked with myself and fellow members of Congress to reauthorize this incredibly successful program again in 2018, safeguarding health coverage and access for all children covered by Child Health Plus.

A national pediatric leader in advocacy and child health policy. He has articulated the importance of providing robust federal funding